
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Environmental Management Systems: Frequently Asked Questions

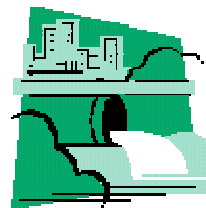
Purpose

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) is interested in helping companies with preventing pollution and saving money while helping the environment. An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a system that shows a company exceeds compliance with all regulations, and will continue to meet the requirements while still improving their pollution prevention techniques. With an EMS, the facility can easily save money and the environment at the same time, with no extra work. This fact sheet further explains EMSs and their relationship to pollution prevention.



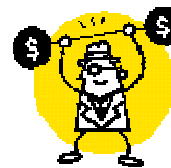
What is an EMS?

Environmental awareness is shaping the actions of today's leading corporations. One tool used by corporations to manage and improve their environmental impacts, and improve their financial performance, is an Environmental Management System (EMS). An EMS is a comprehensive, organized, and documented system for an organization to manage all of its actions that affect the environment. It is a system that requires planning, reviewing, revising and improving a company's method of maintaining compliance and reducing waste. When a company spends the time to work towards an EMS, the results are tremendous for the environment and company profits. An EMS encourages companies to get organized and look at pollution prevention solutions for their waste streams. This also allows the company to learn more about their waste streams, for example the effects it has on the environment and how well it benefits both the Earth and the company when pollution prevention steps are taken. The most commonly used EMS is the ISO 14001 system.



Is my business too small to have the resources for an EMS?

Many small businesses may feel they do not significantly impact the environment and do not have the resources to significantly improve their impact. However, everyone impacts the environment, and with proper planning and organization, even a small business can make a tremendous impact on their profits while helping the environment. The standards for an EMS are made so that any organization from any field or size can implement one. The only characteristics a company needs for success is organization and a lot of planning. Pollution prevention planning can be an important first step.



How does an EMS relate to Pollution Prevention (P2)?

Pollution prevention is the practice of reducing or eliminating wastes or pollutants at the source. To do this, companies should take the following six steps:

1. **Get Organized.** Create a planning committee that is composed of workers from different departments that can provide different expertise on the P2 topic.
2. **Analyze Processes.** Inspect each sub-process. Pinpoint energy and material inputs, determine the sources of waste, calculate the total cost, set priorities, and start on the projects.
3. **Identify Alternatives.** Create a variety of ideas for alternative methods to replace the current processes.
4. **Evaluate Alternatives.** Determine whether the alternatives will be effective, implementable, and economical to the company.
5. **Implement Projects.** Plan on when the projects will be started, start the project, and obtain feedback from employees.
6. **Measure Progress.** Collect data to get information on how well the project is working.



These steps are simply the basis of an EMS. If a facility is involved with P2 practices, then it is probably very close to obtaining an EMS. As a company finds ways to stop pollution before it is created, it is also coming into compliance with regulations.

What will a company gain by getting an EMS?

Companies that have EMSs have found many cost saving opportunities, along with appealing to customers, gaining a market advantage, and improving their public image. With an EMS, companies have been able to control their liabilities, which makes both the employers and employees happy, as well as their insurers. Facilities have less of a problem maintaining compliance, which saves money, time and a lot of hassle. An EMS will also ultimately make employees know all laws and regulations for their business. All company obligations will be documented, so the material will be readily available at any time. Since environmental performance and financial performance are connected with an EMS, companies can be assured success and growth.

What does ISO certification (or registration) mean?

Any company can claim themselves to be ISO certified, or they can hire third-party registrars to certify their system. For example, to be ISO 14001 certified, the business must have:

- An environmental policy, where the business states its commitment to environmental performance.
- Planning, where the organization analyzes its impact on the environment.
- Practicing, where the company uses the processes that will help reach environmental goals.
- Monitoring, where the organization makes sure the goals are being met constantly.
- Management Review, where the EMS is reviewed to ensure it is effective and being met.
- Continual improvement, where the company regularly searches for new and improved ways for eliminating waste streams.

What are the advantages of ISO 14001 Certification?

By being ISO 14001 certified, a company is sure to save money and the environment. That company will also appeal to customers (some customers are requiring it), and can maintain good public relations as well as government relations. It is possible to get insurance at a reasonable cost and reduce incidents that may result in liability. Lastly, but not least, that company will not

have to worry as much about compliance with regulations, because they will always be improving their status.

For More Information

If you have questions about Environmental Management Systems, please contact Bob Minicucci at (603) 271-2941 or email rminicucci@des.state.nh.us. Any questions or interests about pollution prevention opportunities can be emailed at nhppp@des.state.nh.us, or call (603) 271-6460.

ISO 14000 and EMS Assistance Consultants
New England Region
Company Information
(Alphabetical by Firm Name)
Last Update: November 2007

Applied Geosystems PO Box 460 Greenland, NH 03840-0460 (603) 427-1600; (603) 427-1640 Fax jtarr@appliedgeosystems.com www.appliedgeosystems.com	The Ardmore Group 99 Broad Street Portsmouth, NH 03801 (603) 431-1834; (603) 431-2965 Fax theardmoregroup@comcast.com
Aries Engineering Inc. 46 South Main St. Concord, NH 03301 (603) 226-2545 mdonahue@aries-eng.com tomroy@aries-eng.com	Atlantic Geoscience Corp. PO Box 7407 Gilford, NH 03247 (603) 524-8866 ; (603) 524-9777 Fax jdonohue@geo-science.com www.geo-science.com
Camp Dresser & McKee Inc. 1001 Elm St. Manchester, NH 03101 (603) 222-8300; (603) 645-6891 Fax diercksje@cdm.com www.cdm.com/Svcs/EMS/index.htm	Camp Dresser & McKee Inc. 50 Hampshire St. Cambridge, MA 02139 (617) 452-6338 ; (617) 452-8338 Fax dentchmd@cdm.com www.cdm.com
Cahaly Environmental 111 Kendall Road Lexington, MA 02421 (781) 860-5240; (781) 860-7261 Fax cahalysr@ix.netcom.com	Capaccio Environmental Engineering, Inc. 293 Boston Post Road Marlborough, MA 01752 (508) 970-0033; (508) 970-0028 Fax jdufresne@capaccio.com
Continental Placer Inc. PO Box 825 Laconia, NH 03247 (603) 524-0811 ; (603) 524-7476 Fax www.continentalplacer.com	Earth Tech 161 North State St. Concord, NH 03301 (603) 226-0940 ; (603) 228-4233 Fax tmarkey@earthtech.com www.earthtech.com
Environmental & Industrial Waste Management 29 Rumford St.	Environmental Resources Management 399 Boylston St. Boston, MA 02116

Concord, NH 03301 (603) 224-0563 ; (603) 224-0540 Fax eiwm@mediaone.net	(617) 646-7826 ; (617) 267-6447 Fax jim_Fitzgerald@erm.com www.erm.com
EORM, Inc. 400 West Cummings Park, Suite 5850 Woburn, MA 01801 (781)756-3825 www.eorm.com	GeoInsight, Inc. 75 Gilcreast Road, Suite 210 Londonderry, NH 03053 (603) 434-3116 x218 www.geoinsightinc.com cmrawnsley@geoinc.com
Great Bay Consulting PO Box 401 Lyndon Center, VT 05850 (802) 272-2773 www.greatbayconsulting.com	GZA Geoenvironmental Inc. 380 Harvey Rd. Manchester, NH 03103 (603) 623-3600 ; (603) 624-9463 Fax bcote@gza.com www.gza.net
Haley & Aldrich Inc. 340 Granite St. Manchester, NH 03102 (603) 625-5353 ; (603) 624-8307 Fax rrb@haleyaldrich.com www.haleyaldrich.com	Harding ESE Inc. 32 DW Highway, Suite 625 Merrimack, NH 03054 (603) 889-3737 ; (603) 880-6111 Fax
Harper Environmental Associates 1811 Hale Hollow Rd. Bridgewater Corners, VT 05035 (802) 672-6112 ; (802) 672-6227 Fax charper@sover.net www.harperenvironmental.com	HAZMATEAM Inc. 12 Kimball Hill Rd. Hudson, NH 03051 (603) 882-1112 ; (603) 882-6512 Fax hazmateam@earthlink.net www.hazmateam.com
Jacques Whitford Co Inc. 75 Pearl St. Portland, ME 04101 (207) 761-7790 ; (207) 761-7790 Fax tcoffin@jacqueswhitford.com www.jacqueswhitford.com	Lexicon Environmental Assoc Inc. 925 Hempstead Turnpike Franklin Square, NY 11010 (516) 488-8742 ; (516) 488-8743 Fax lexiconli@aol.com www.lexiconenvironmental.com
Masters Environmental PO Box 413 Belmont, NH 03220 (603) 267-7368 rebrobst@juno.com	Al Nierenberg 38 Herrick Road (978) 887-1223; (978) 887-8668 Fax Boxford, MA 01921 alnierenberg@attbi.com
OccuHealth, Inc. 8 Industrial Park Drive Hooksett, NH 03106-1851 (603) 641-3503; (603) 641-3954 Fax email@occuhealth.com	PRIZM, Inc. 106 Birkdale Street Bedford, NH 03110 (603) 472-2554 mailto:dsasseville@prizim-inc.com
Pteric Associates PO Box 1292 Nashua, NH 03061-1292 pteric@earthlink.net	SECOR International Inc. 120 South St. Wrentham, MA 02093 (508) 384-0102 ; (508) 384-0069 Fax

www.ptericassociates.com	cschultz@secor.com www.secor.com
Smart Association Environmental Consultants 72 North Main St. Concord, NH 03301 (603) 224-7550 ; (603) 224-7890 Fax lboutwell@smartenvironmental.com www.smartenvironmental.com	T.Quest Systems 139 Isinglass Road Portland, CT 06480 (860) 342-1457; (203) 699-3321 jeffflynn9@aol.com
Wellfleet Associates 106 Birkdale Road Bedford, NH 03110 (603) 472-5684 ; (603) 488-1414 Fax Wellfleet@attbi.com	WESTON 1 Wall St. Manchester, NH 03101 (603) 656-5400 ; (603) 656-5401 Fax goodwinp@wseinc.com

This is not a complete list of all consultants available, nor does it imply endorsement from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. August 2005